

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Airlines prefer to hire poised, tactful, and resourceful people who can interact comfortably with strangers and remain calm under duress. Applicants usually must be at least 18 to 21 years old. Flight attendants must have excellent health and the ability to speak clearly. In addition, there generally are height requirements and most airlines want candidates with weight proportionate to height.

Prospective flight attendants usually must be willing to relocate, although some flight attendants are able to commute to and from their home base. Applicants must be high school graduates. Those having several years of college or experience in dealing with the public are preferred. More and more flight attendants being hired are college graduates. Highly desirable areas of concentration include such people oriented disciplines as psychology and education. Flight attendants for international airlines generally must speak an appropriate foreign language fluently. Some of the major airlines prefer candidates who can speak two major foreign languages for their international flights.

Once hired, candidates must undergo a period of training. The length of training depends on the size and type of carrier, ranging from 4 to 7 weeks, and takes place in the airline's flight training center. Airlines that do not operate training centers generally send new employees to the center of another airline. Airlines may provide transportation to the training centers and an allowance for board, room, and school supplies. However, new trainees are not considered employees of the airline until they successfully complete the training program. Some airlines may actually charge individuals for training. Trainees learn emergency procedures such as evacuating an airplane, operating emergency systems and equipment, administering first aid, and water survival tactics. In addition, trainees are taught how to deal with disruptive passengers and hijacking and terrorist situations. New hires learn flight regulations and duties, company operations and policies, and receive instruction on personal grooming and weight control. Trainees for the international routes get additional instruction in passport and customs regulations. Towards the end of their training, students go on practice flights. Additionally, flight attendants must receive 12 to 14 hours of annual training in emergency procedures and passenger relations.

After completing initial training, flight attendants are assigned to one of their airline's bases. New flight attendants are placed on "reserve status" and are called on either to staff extra flights or fill in for crew members who are sick or on vacation or rerouted. When not on duty, reserve flight attendants must be available to report for flights on short notice. They usually remain on reserve for at least 1 year, but in some cities it may take 5 to 10 years or longer to advance from reserve status. Flight attendants who no longer are on reserve bid monthly for regular assignments. Because assignments are based on seniority, usually only the most experienced attendants get their choice of assignments. Advancement takes longer today than in the past because experienced flight attendants are remaining in this career longer than they used to.

Some flight attendants become supervisors, or take on additional duties such as recruiting and instructing.

### Job Outlook

Opportunities should be favorable for persons seeking flight attendant jobs because the number of applicants is expected to be roughly the same as the number of job openings. Those with at least 2 years of college and experience in dealing with the public should have the best chance of being hired.

As airline restrictions on employment have been abolished, turnover—which traditionally was very high—has declined. Nevertheless, the majority of job openings through the year 2008 should be due to the need to replace flight attendants who transfer to other occupations or who leave the labor force. Many flight attendants are attracted to the occupation by the glamour of the airline industry and the opportunity to travel, but some eventually leave in search of jobs that offer higher earnings and require fewer nights away from their families.

Employment of flight attendants is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2008. Growth in population and income is expected to increase the number of airline passengers. Airlines enlarge their capacity by increasing the number and size of planes in operation. Since Federal Aviation Administration safety rules require one attendant for every 50 seats, more flight attendants will be needed.

Employment of flight attendants is sensitive to cyclical swings in the economy. During recessions, when the demand for air travel declines, many flight attendants are put on part-time status or laid off. Until demand increases, few new flight attendants are hired.

### Earnings

According to data from the Association of Flight Attendants, beginning flight attendants had median earnings of about \$13,700 a year in 1998. Flight attendants with 6 years of experience had median annual earnings of about \$20,000, while some senior flight attendants earned as much as \$50,000 a year.

Beginning pay scales for flight attendants vary by carrier. New hires usually begin at the same pay scale regardless of experience, and all flight attendants receive the same future pay increases. Flight attendants receive extra compensation for night and international flights and for increased hours. In addition, some airlines offer incentive pay for working holidays or taking positions that require additional responsibility or paper work. Most airlines guarantee a minimum of 65 to 75 flight hours per month, with the option to work additional hours. Flight attendants also receive a "per diem" allowance for meal expenses while on duty away from home. In addition, flight attendants and their immediate families are entitled to free fares on their own airline and reduced fares on most other airlines.

Flight attendants are required to purchase uniforms and wear them while on duty. The airlines usually pay for uniform replacement items, and may provide a small allowance to cover cleaning and upkeep of the uniforms.

The majority of flight attendants hold union membership, primarily with the Association of Flight Attendants. Others may be members of the Transport Workers Union of America, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, or other unions.

### Related Occupations

Other jobs that involve helping people as a safety professional while requiring the ability to be calm even under trying circumstances include emergency medical technician, firefighter, maritime crew, and camp counselor.

### Sources of Additional Information

Information about job opportunities and the qualifications required for a particular airline may be obtained by writing to the airline's personnel office.

## Home Health and Personal Care Aides

(O\*NET 66011 and 68035)

### Significant Points

- Numerous job openings will result due to very fast employment growth and very high turnover.
- Education required for entry-level jobs is generally minimal, but earnings are low.

### Nature of the Work

Home health and personal care aides help elderly, disabled, and ill persons live in their own homes instead of in a health facility. Most

work with elderly or disabled clients who need more extensive care than family or friends can provide. Some home health and personal care aides work with families in which a parent is incapacitated and small children need care. Others help discharged hospital patients who have relatively short-term needs.

In general, *home health aides* provide health-related services, such as administering oral medications under physicians' orders or direction of a nurse. In contrast, *personal care* and *home care aides* provide mainly housekeeping and routine personal care services. However, there can be substantial variation in job titles and overlap of duties.

Most home health and personal care aides provide some housekeeping services, as well as personal care to their clients. They clean clients' houses, do laundry, and change bed linens. Some aides plan meals (including special diets), shop for food, and cook. Home health and personal care aides may also help clients move from bed, bathe, dress, and groom. Some accompany clients outside the home, serving as guide, companion, and aide.

Home health and personal care aides also provide instruction and psychological support. For example, they may assist in toilet training a severely mentally handicapped child, or just listen to clients talk about their problems.

Home health aides may check pulse, temperature, and respiration; help with simple prescribed exercises; and assist with medication routines. Occasionally, they change nonsterile dressings, use special equipment such as a hydraulic lift, give massages and alcohol rubs, or assist with braces and artificial limbs.

In home care agencies, it is usually a registered nurse, a physical therapist, or a social worker who assigns specific duties and supervises home health and personal care aides. Aides keep records of services performed and of clients' condition and progress. They report changes in the client's condition to the supervisor or case manager. Home health and personal care aides also participate in case reviews, consulting with the team caring for the client—registered nurses, therapists, and other health professionals.

### Working Conditions

The home health and personal care aide's daily routine may vary. Aides may go to the same home every day for months or even years. However, most aides work with a number of different clients, each

job lasting a few hours, days, or weeks. Aides often visit four or five clients on the same day.

Surroundings differ from case to case. Some homes are neat and pleasant, while others are untidy or depressing. Some clients are angry, abusive, depressed, or otherwise difficult; others are pleasant and cooperative.

Home health and personal care aides generally work on their own, with periodic visits by their supervisor. They receive detailed instructions explaining when to visit clients and what services to perform. Many aides work part time, and weekend hours are common.

Aides are individually responsible for getting to the client's home. They may spend a good portion of the working day traveling from one client to another; motor vehicle accidents are always a danger. They are particularly susceptible to injuries resulting from all types of overexertion when assisting patients, and falls inside and outside their homes. Mechanical lifting devices that are available in institutional settings are seldom available in patients' homes.

### Employment

Home health and personal care aides held about 746,000 jobs in 1998. Most aides are employed by home health and personal care agencies, visiting nurse associations, residential care facilities with home health departments, hospitals, public health and welfare departments, community volunteer agencies, nursing and personal care facilities, and temporary help firms. Self-employed aides have no agency affiliation or supervision, and accept clients, set fees, and arrange work schedules on their own.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

In some States, this occupation is open to individuals with no formal training. On-the-job training is generally provided. Other States may require formal training, depending on Federal or State law.

The Federal Government has enacted guidelines for home health aides whose employers receive reimbursement from Medicare. Federal law requires home health aides to pass a competency test covering 12 areas: Communication skills; observation, reporting, and documentation of patient status and the care or services furnished; reading and recording vital signs; basic infection control procedures; basic elements of body function and changes; maintenance of a clean, safe, and healthy environment; recognition of, and procedures for, emergencies; the physical, emotional, and developmental characteristics of the patients served; personal hygiene and grooming; safe transfer techniques; normal range of motion and positioning; and basic nutrition.

A home health aide may take training before taking the competency test. Federal law suggests at least 75 hours of classroom and practical training supervised by a registered nurse. Training and testing programs may be offered by the employing agency, but must meet the standards of the Health Care Financing Administration. Training programs vary depending upon State regulations.

The National Association for Home Care offers national certification for home health and personal care aides. The certification is a voluntary demonstration that the individual has met industry standards.

Successful home health and personal care aides like to help people and do not mind hard work. They should be responsible, compassionate, emotionally stable, and cheerful. Aides should also be tactful, honest, and discreet because they work in private homes.

Home health and personal care aides must be in good health. A physical examination including State regulated tests such as those for tuberculosis may be required.

Advancement is limited. In some agencies, workers start out performing homemaker duties, such as cleaning. With experience and training, they may take on personal care duties. The most experienced home health aides assist with medical equipment such as ventilators, which help patients breathe.

### Job Outlook

A large number of job openings are expected for home health and personal care aides, due to substantial growth and very high turnover.



*Home health and personal care aides provide housekeeping services, personal care, and emotional support for their clients.*

Home health and personal care aides is expected to be one of the fastest growing occupations through the year 2008.

The number of people in their seventies and older is projected to rise substantially. This age group is characterized by mounting health problems requiring some assistance. Also, there will be an increasing reliance on home care for patients of all ages. This trend reflects several developments: Efforts to contain costs by moving patients out of hospitals and nursing facilities as quickly as possible, the realization that treatment can be more effective in familiar surroundings rather than clinical surroundings, and the development and improvement of medical technologies for in-home treatment.

In addition to jobs created by the increase in demand for these workers, replacement needs are expected to produce numerous openings. Turnover is high, a reflection of the relatively low skill requirements, low pay, and high emotional demands of the work. For these same reasons, many people are unwilling to perform this kind of work. Therefore, persons who are interested in this work and suited for it should have excellent job opportunities, particularly those with experience or training as home health, personal care, or nursing aides.

### Earnings

Median hourly earnings of home health and personal care aides were \$7.58 in 1998. The middle 50 percent earned between \$6.41 and \$8.81 an hour. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$5.73 and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$10.51 an hour. Median hourly earnings in the industries employing the largest number of home health aides in 1997 were as follows:

Home health care services .....	\$8.00
Hospitals .....	7.90
Personnel supply services .....	7.70
Residential care .....	7.20
Individual and family services .....	7.20

Median hourly earnings in the industries employing the largest number of personal and home care aides in 1997 are shown below:

Local government, except education and hospitals .....	\$8.00
Job training and related services .....	7.30
Residential care .....	7.20
Individual and family services .....	7.00
Home health care services .....	6.00

Most employers give slight pay increases with experience and added responsibility. Aides are usually paid only for the time worked in the home. They normally are not paid for travel time between jobs. Most employers hire only "on-call" hourly workers and provide no benefits.

### Related Occupations

Home health and personal care aide is a service occupation combining duties of health workers and social service workers. Workers in related occupations that involve personal contact to help or instruct others include attendants in children's institutions, childcare attendants in schools, child monitors, companions, nursing aides, nursery school attendants, occupational therapy aides, nursing aides, physical therapy aides, playroom attendants, and psychiatric aides.

### Sources of Additional Information

General information about training and referrals to State and local agencies about opportunities for home health and personal care aides, a list of relevant publications, and information on national certification are available from:

☛ National Association for Home Care, 228 7<sup>th</sup> St. SE., Washington, DC 20003. Internet: <http://www.nahc.org>

For information about a career as a home health aide and schools offering training, contact:

☛ National Association of Health Career Schools, 2301 Academy Dr., Harrisburg, PA 17112.

## Preschool Teachers and Child-Care Workers

(O\*NET 31303 and 68038)

### Significant Points

- About 40 percent of preschool teachers and child-care workers—more than 4 times the proportion for all workers—are self-employed; most of these are family child-care providers.
- A high school diploma and little or no experience are adequate for many jobs, but training requirements vary from a high school diploma to a college degree.
- Employment growth, high turnover, and relatively low training requirements will make it easy to enter this occupation.

### Nature of the Work

Preschool teachers and child-care workers nurture and teach preschool children—age 5 or younger—in child-care centers, nursery schools, preschools, public schools, and family child-care homes. These workers play an important role in a child's development by caring for the child when parents are at work or away for other reasons. Some parents enroll their children in nursery schools or child-care centers primarily to provide them with the opportunity to interact with other children. In addition to attending to children's basic needs, these workers organize activities that stimulate the children's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth. They help children explore their interests, develop their talents and independence, build self-esteem, and learn how to behave with others.

Preschool teachers and child-care workers spend most of their day working with children. However, they do maintain contact with parents or guardians, through informal meetings or scheduled conferences, to discuss each child's progress and needs. Many preschool teachers and child-care workers keep records of each child's progress and suggest ways that parents can increase their child's learning and development at home. Some preschools and child-care centers actively recruit parent volunteers to work with the children and participate in administrative decisions and program planning.

Most preschool teachers and child-care workers perform a combination of basic care and teaching duties. Through many basic care activities, preschool teachers and child-care workers provide opportunities for children to learn. For example, a worker who shows a child how to



*Preschool teachers and child-care workers use playful activities to teach young children.*